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Editorial

Dear Friends,

At the outset, we extend our sincere thanks to our editor Shri. P. D. Dharwarkar, who has edited 'PATHWAY TO GOD' for the last 15 years. Under his stewardship the Pathway To God reached its new heights. His knowledge & his understanding about Shri Gurudev and his Philosophy is known to one and all. He could have continued further but, for his health and advanced age, he wants to retire. So with heavy heart we want to bid him farewell. We pray God to give him good health & prosperity. On behalf of the Management we just say, 'जीवेत शरद शतम.' You all know what our 'Pathway To God' is doing in the field of Philosophy and in understanding the nature of human existence. We are proud that we have got the blessings of so many good writers, thinkers and philosophers. We hope, we would be able to get their help and assistance in bringing out the 'Pathway To God' in its usual form and splendour.

We again request our contributors, writers and thinkers to extend their cooperation in making the 'Pathway To God' as one of the best periodicals, in the field of knowledge & Philosophy. We have no other way except pray Sri Gurudev to bless us in this pious endeavour.

This is the age of competition. Everything is fast changing. We are in the rat-race. If we fail to cope up wirh this blind race, we are bound to suffer. Suffering a defeat, seperation and isolation makes us desperate.

The modern age with its Scientific and Technological support has certainly elevated the standards of living. The knowledge has brought material comforts to our doors, but are we sure that we are happy? Can we say that anxious moments of our existance have disappeared ? The media savvy gurus have in any way giving us a 'MANTRA' which is helping us in solving our problems. Some time back, I remember reading a strange item. In all four directions, and at the outskirts of Losangeles city, the board are found fixed. It was written thus : *"You are out of Losangeles now, you can resume your normal behaviour.* " Strange but true, nobody can remain in a city with his normal behaviour. Everyone behaves abnormally in big metropolis.

The new way of life has thrown many new challenges to the very existence of life. Man gradually slipping into the trap of his own knowledge. Science and Technology have brought us so many good things in our life, but 'side effects' are disappointing. Man is becoming small, selfcentered and cruel. Where is the answer for all this ? Politics has reached its all time low level. Why this ?

We feel that only saints and seers and people like Gurudev may help us in this time of distress, and disorder. So, we want to conclude with these lines of Dr. Paul Brunton, " The profound difficulty of discovering a correct answer to this question is such that even today our greatest scientists must bow their heads in humble ignorance because all the victories of knowledge have still done little more than touch fringe of this problem". And what is this problem ? The problem is - 'What is the meaning of it all?'

-Editor in Chief.

RAMA-STAVA-RAJA

There are in Sanskrit many works that contain praise of various dieties. Rama-stava-raja (the best eulogy of the God Rama) is one of them. Rama-stava-raja (RSR) is a short work extending over 98 verses. It is found in the book called Sanat-kumara-samhita narrated by Suta, the traditional bard. This Suta mentions the background of this RSR as follows : Once the Pandava king Yudhisthira asked Vedvyasa[1] about the means of salvation (St. I-2). Vyasa tells him that Rama is the highest Brahman and that utterence of Rama's name leads to liberation. (St. 3-6), and then he says that he will quote RSR which was formerly uttered by the sage Narada and it is the means to redemption (St. 7-9). In the utterence of Narada, first Narada is said to have meditated on Rama (St. 10-21) and then his praise of Rama is given. Thereafter Rama reveals himself before Narada (St. 22-26). Then Narada starts to eulogise Rama (St.27-76). This is the main eulogy. After giving this eulogy, Vyasa points out that Rama pleased with praise of Narada offers him boons. Rama gave to Narada whatever he wanted and then Rama disappeared from the presence of Narada. (St. 77-85). Then Vyasa mentions the phala-sruti of this RSR (St. 86-91) and then in conclusion Vyasa offers his homage to Rama (St. 92-98) and then the work RSR comes to an end.

In this RSR following points are noteworthy : (I) Rama's relatives namely his father, mother, brothers and wife are mentioned. (2) Persons that had come in contact with Rama like Vasistha, Visvamitra are noted.

(3) There are allusions to semi-divine beings like Vidyadharas. (4) The incident that Rama broke the bow of Sankara in the Self-choice of Sita is reffered to. (5) Many epithets of Rama are based on Raghu one of the ancestors of Rama. (6) Rama is identified with Visnu. (7) Rama is identified with various incarnations of Visnu like Parasurama and Narsimha. (Strangely enough Rama is identified with Krisna an incarnation of Visnu later than Rama and also with Krisna's brother Balarama). (8) There is a description of physical personality of Rama. (9) Some of the words and phrases like 'Ramam rajiva locanam' reminds of similar or same words and phrases occuring in other eulogies.

From philosophical point of view, it is important to note that (1) Rama is mentioned as the qualified (Saguna) Highest/Supreme God, that (2) Rama is identified with qualityless (Nirguna) Highest Brahman, and that (3) Rama is identified with everything in this universe.

Now after mentioning the salient features of this RSR is given the Sanskrit text of RSR with translation. Some explanatory notes are given at the end.

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Text of RSR and its translation

श्री गणेशाय[2] नम: ।। अस्य श्रीरामचंद्र[3]-स्तव-राज-स्तोत्र-मंत्रस्य सनत्कुमार ऋषि: ।
श्री रामो देवता । अनुष्टुप छंद: । सीता बीजम् । हनुमान् शक्ति: ।
श्रीराम प्रीत्यर्थे जपे विनियोग: ।।

Salutation to Sri Ganesa. Sanatkumara is the seer-sage of this chant in the form of the eulogy named Sri Ramacandra[4] -stava-raja. Srirama[5] is the deity. The metre is[6] anustup. Sita is the seed. Hanuman is the strength. It is to be employed in the uttering of mantra in order to please Srirama.

(1) सूत उवाच–

सर्व–शास्त्रार्थ–तत्त्वज्ञं व्यासं सत्यवती–सुनम ।
धर्मपुत्र:प्रहृष्टाता प्रत्युवाच मुनीश्वरम् ॥१॥

Suta spoke :- (Once) Yudhisthira the son of Dharma with exceedingly delighted mind said to Vyasa, the son of Satyawati, the knower of the meanings (or essence) of all sastras, and the lord of the sages (1).

(2) युधिष्ठिर उवाच–

भगवन् योगिनांश्रेष्ठ सर्व–शास्त्र–विशारद ।
किं तत्त्वं किं परंजाप्य किं ध्यानं मुक्ति–साधनम् ॥२॥
श्रोतुमिच्छमितत् सर्वं ब्रूहि मे मुनिसत्तम ।

Yudhisthira asked : O revered Sir, O supreme among the yogins, O expert in all sastras, I desire to hear (from you) all those answers (to my questions namely):- What is the supreme principle ? What is the supreme chant (mantra) fit to be repeated ? And which is the meditation that is the means to emancipation ? O best among sages, (please) tell me (2).

(3-4) वेद व्यास उवाच (३) – (४) –

धर्मराज महाभाग शृणुवक्ष्यामि तत्त्वत: ॥३॥
यज्ञ परं यद् गुणात्रीतं यज्ज्योतिरमलं शिवम् ।
तदेव परमंतत्त्वं कैवल्य–पद–कारणम् ॥४॥

Vedavyasa replied :- O highly fortunate Dharmaraja, listen. I will explain to you all things in the real manner. That alone which is most excellent (para), which is beyond the qualities, which is dustless/dirtless (i.e. pure), which is auspicious flame is the highest principle and it is the cause of the place/station called Kaivalya (3-4).

(5) श्री रामेति परंजाप्यं तारकं ब्रह्मसंज्ञकम् ।
ब्रह्म हत्यादि–पापदनमिति वेदविदो विद: ॥५॥

The most exellent chant (mantra) to mutter is (the word) Srirama. This, the knowers of the Vedas know, is the saviour named Brahman, and is the destroyer of sins like killing a Brahmin (5).

(6) श्री राम समेति जना ये जयंतिच सर्वदा ।
तेषां भुक्तिश्च मुक्तिश्च भविष्यति न संशय: ॥६॥

There is no doubt that there will be both enjoyment (in this life) as well as salvation, in case of those persons who always recite/mutter (the name) Srirama Rama (6).

(7) स्तवराजं पुराप्रोक्तं नारदेन च धीमता ।
तत् सर्वं –प्रवक्ष्यामि हरि–ध्यान–पुर:सरम् ॥७॥

In ancient time, Stava-raja was uttered by the wise/intelligent sage Narada. I will describe all that, preceded by (the mention of) meditation on Hari (7).

(8)-(9) ताप–त्रयाग्नि–शमनं सर्वाद्यौद्य–निंकृतनम ।
दारिद्य–दु:ख–शमनं सर्व–संपत्–करं शिवम् ॥८॥
विज्ञान–फलदं दिव्यं मौक्षेक–फलं–साधनम् ।
नमस्कृत्य प्रवक्ष्यामि रामकृष्णं जगन्मयम् ॥९॥

This Rama - stava - raja is extinguisher of fire in the form of triad of troubles/sorrows, destroyer of masses of all sins, pacifier of the grief (arising) from poverty, giver of all the riches (or excellent things), auspicious/beneficial (8), giver of the fruit of special knowledge, divine, and the means which gives salvation as the only one fruit. After saluting Rama (who is) the same Krsna and includes (in him) the world, I will narrate (to you) this stavaraja (9).

Verses No. 10 and 11-A are introductory to meditation on Rama and verses Nos. 11-B to 21 describe how Rama is to be thought over or meditated upon. All the words in the Accusative singular in Verses Nos. 11-B to 21 and in Verse No. 22 are the object of the word 'Sancintayan' in Verse No. 22, and all these words describe Rama.

Notes :-

1. Three Vyasas are mentioned in ancient literature : Vedavyasa, Krsna Dvaipayana Vyasa, and Badarayana Vyasa. Vedavyasa is one who is connected with the arrangement of the Vedas.
2. Customarily everything is begun with salutation to the god Ganesa.
3. RSR being a panegyric has its own sage etc.

4-5 Sriramacandra and Srirama are the same as Rama.

6. Many stanzas in this RSR are composed in metres other than anustup.

(Now the notes are given stanzawise).

1. The word Dharmaputra means Yudhisthira. Kunti, the mother of Pandavas, as per the boon of the sage Durvasas, had called for Yama who begot in her a son who was named Yudhisthira. Satyavati was the daughter of a fisherman, in whom the sage Parasara begot a son that was named Vyasa. Sastra is a book that guides human conduct.
2. The word 'para' (supreme) is to be construed with both 'tattvam' and 'japyam'. The word 'dhyana' can be taken as a separate item, and 'mukti-sadhanam' as another question.

3-4. Vyasa is called Vedavyasa for two reasons : (1) He was knower of the Vedas. (2) He was responsible for the arrangement of the vedic material. Dharmaraja is another name of Yudhisthira. Here the word 'tattva' stands for the Supreme (Parama) reality which is the most excellent one. It is beyond the three gunas namely Sattva, Rajas and Tamas which belong to Prakrti the non-sentient principle or to Maya the power of the highest lord. This reality is free from all impure things and is auspicious. It is flame of light i.e. it is of the nature of knowledge which is usually compared to light. Hence words like Atma-jyotih, parama jyotih are found used. The word 'kaivalya' properly belongs to Sankhya philosophy; Aloneness(Kaivalya) of purusa the sentient principle is salvation in Sankhya philosophy. Later on the word Kaivalya was employed as a synonym for liberation (moksa, mukti). The highest principle is the cause of salvation in the sense that its knowledge leads to liberation. Taraka is that which uplifts or saves(from the ocean of empirical life). Brahman is the supreme reality. In ancient India, killing of a Brahmin was considered to be a serious sin. There are four vedas named Rgveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda.The Knowers of the vedas are the wise people.

6. Bhakti is worldly enjoyment of various pleasures in this world and empirical advantages.

7. Stavaraja here stands for Rama-stava -raja The word Hari in Sanskrit has many meanings. Here Hari may stand for the god Visnu.

8-9. In this world Human beings suffer threefold trouble or sorrow namely Adhyatmika (Related to body and mind), Adhiabhautika (issunig from elements like fire) Adhidaivika (Issuing from deities). This threefold Misery is usually compared to fire. The incarnation of Krisna was later than that of Rama. But in this Stavaraja, Rama is identified with Krisna. The word Jaganmaya can mean that Rama as the highest god includes in him the universe. Later on in this work, Rama is identified with every thing in this universe.

9. In that sense then the world can be said to be of the nature Rama

10. Ayodhya was the capital city of king Dasaratha the father of Rama.

(To be continued.....)

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What Kabir meant that this 'Ishwara' was born from 'Brahman' with the help of 'Maya', so 'Maya' was his mother; and with the help of 'Maya' he created a whole universe, so 'Maya' was his wife. Not understanding this allegorical conception about 'Niranjana', people have regarded this doctrine of 'Niranjana' in later Kabirism as the doctrine of 'Saitan' which is an absolute misunderstanding of the allegorical meaning underlying the conception of 'Niranjana'.

-Gurudeo Ranade in

Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, p.106

THE ROLE OF BHAKTI BHAVA AND PREMA BHAVA IN DANCER - A DANCER'S QUEST

The role of Prema-Love and Bhakti -devotion is pivotal in divine dance forms as Bharatnatyam. The combination of Nritta (pure dance), Abhinaya (pure expression) and Nritya (expressional dancing) when portrayed in a spirit of total ecstacy, rising above the physical realm and parameters of the body shall lead the dancer close to the limitless domain of the COSMIC SELF. Such Natyopasana - devotional fervour in dance wherein the dance assumes worshipful nature, leads to Natyabrahman - Realizing the Universal within the individual self, a dancer uses his/her own personality comprising of physical form and mental states as the primary vehicle in the first stage, then enters or takes up the personality of the various characters represented as the secondary vehicle in the second stage, unwinds shackles of personal traits as the dance level develops and deepens and then finally he/she gets elevated to the highest spiritual sphere.

In this relation, the relevant emotion and application of Bhakti and Prema Bhavas comes forth. In the Shastra, it is termed as SRINGARA-Love; and is given the first place among Rasas-aesthetic flavours of Dance and drama. Sringara is considered as the Rasa Raja -it rules literally because in it's portrayal alone is the inherent scope to touch upon other Bhavas too. Taking it's three basic delineations as Vatsalya (Motherly affection), Rati (Union of male and female principles) and Bhakti (self -surrender and devotion to Lord Almighty), Sringara becomes delectable in any from whatsoever and offers the easiest path to be ONE with the ethereal world-Natya Yoga.

But How?

A dancer could be amply skilled and sincere too, but unless there is a sublimation of the ego, the dance cannot be effective in creating RASANUBHAVA, the impact of splendour .The dancer merges in to spirit of dance, surrenders to the magnificence of dance and spontaneously expresses a divine energy and this is when the audiences are also transported to similar experiences. Inspiration and intuition through dance follows both in dancer and the onlooker and irrespective of language or religious barriers, audiences can feel the divine energy. It is through the emotion-packed songs and lyrics, their exposition with portrayal of episodes, events, legends,historical,characters and vibrations are created for the audience to empathize totally and derive a fulfilling Rasa.

The musicians and the dancers can thus become 'transmitters'. Negating the egoistic tendencies and considering oneself only as an instrument to experince divinity should be the aim of the dancer's quest. It is said that TRUE MOVEMENT CANNOT LIE. True joy would remain elusive if Bhakti or devotion and correspondingly, Prema or love to everyone and everything and everywhere is not felt and practised. However, this cannot be always taught but can perhaps be imbibed in the contact of eminent Gurus.

Looking at the above process and essence of Natya ,we can assess philosophical terms like Advaita, Vishishta Advaita and Dvaita. The concept of a dancer becoming one with the danced dance through Natya Yoga is principally and essentially holistic and Advaitic while on the other hand, the aesthetic representation and appreciation of manifestations of divinity incorporated in dance are examples of admitting to theosophies like Vishishta Advaita. Again, the Bhakti - Marg (the pathway to God) prescribed by magnanimous saints from all over the world is so much suffused with infectious love, humble devotion and self-surrender, that dancing to their innumerable compositions (Keertanam) has the potency to infuse spiritual well-being.

Universal power/ God's power can be experienced in many aspects of life. The innate meaning of Yoga (unity of jivatman with paramatman) has to be borne in mind to achieve this. Spiritualizing the practice of dance can lead to this Spiritualizing one's sensuality again leads to this as there is a unity of male and female aspects. There arises a physical, emotional and spiritual bonding. It is this Godly 'Power' that triggers off creation, sustenannce and destruction, the supreme oneness of PURUSHA and PRAKRITI. Universal Love/God's Love can be experienced in certain relationships in life. The unconditional love of a mother for the child is one of kind. This kind of love also has the positive advantage of being eternal and perpetual as man and his progeny will go on as long as the cycle of life remains . Some have the unique experience of divine love with their consorts like the case of Radha and Krishna . Some feel this with their masters or Sadgurus who have taken human birth. Coming to the arts ; creating ,adding from (from Nirguna to Saguna) and placing this Divinity on the Highest Pedestal become the

the right tools to communicate and a must for successful dramatic representation. Advaitam, true Shantam, resing in monism can be the 'end' indeed where there cannot be any mundane expression but Natya in order to carry the dancer and spectators, has to be throughly expressive and appear world-related. It is multi-dimensional, physically externalizing through movement and emotions using eyes, parts of face, neck, limbs.....and also all alone internalizing by co-relating the mind. Above all, witnessing all these ephemeral states is 'the mystical eye' that can make one see the divine reality in the dance. Hence, one can understand the dance as LIFE it self.... as Cosmic movement....as infinite cycle of creation, sustenance and destruction .- THE REAL DANCE OF SHIVA!

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OUR FESTIVE IMAGES AND DOLLS

In India from the month of August starts a continuous period of festive celebration throughout the country in a every village, town, city, every nook and corner. During Krishna Janamashtami, some rock the adorable baby Lord in cradles, sing lullabies and songs in His praise, some imitate his pranks (the Leelas) as the butter thief and climb atop one another to break pots of butter milk while some simply find ecstasy. in singing and dancing His Bhajans with devotional outbursts. Ganeshji is brough home amidst pomp and splendour. Every year, the sculptors kindle their creative spirits and bring out such amazingly lovely images of this most lovable Lord.

Then when He gets immersed, it is a sad sight at our beaches and lakes to see the dialapidated pieces of the idols. Agreed that these pictures give a sad story on how a handsome,benevolent, revered GOD is brought down to this state. But that is the legend of this GANESHJI who took to form from dust and is significant of so many truths of life....even his exit after festival! It only is a reflection of life cycle, birth to death and the fact that decay ,disease and suffering are an unavoidable part of this cycle. The Festival ritual of bringing home this Murti ,embellishing HIM, preparing HIS PRASAD, loving and worshipping HIM more than a member of our close family thus bringing life into the idol just as a temple TANTRI would do (of course any such worship has to be done in the proper manner to get positive effects) and then closing the chapter (every year) by immersing him seems symbolic of man's coming into existence and going back to dust/soil. Our form is only the representation of the formless.

Dolls play an important role in our lives. Be it during childhood, be it during adolescence or be it during our later part of life. We have all been making, collecting and using dolls to keep amused at play, to adorn homes with puppets or curios,to tell stories and more than anything, to offer our prayers symbolically as we do to our deities. The variety of dolls assembled aesthetically at NAVARATRI includes not only the deities but also human forms engaged in some activities or other like music, dancing, household chores or even games such as cricket. The various themes significantly represent the divinity in man and spread the message of love and unity, brotherhood and community devolopment.

The nine days signify worship for three days each for the three major Goddesses, Lakshmi Devi , Parvaty Devi and Saraswaty Devi each of them being bestowersof happiness prosperity and learning. It symbolizes the importance given to Stree Shakti in our Puranas. The Energy-Parkriti that is embodied in the universal forms unites with remains as the universal Self.

This great truth is represented when we place the human couple, generally made of wood, in the center of the dolls-display. That we are ourselves comprised of the five elements is represented by the 'Kalasha' containing water, mango leaves, fruits, etc and lit brightly by a lamp just in front of it.

Our prayers, our rituals, our customs,our symbols,our arts and cultural heritage do have meaning,beauty, significance and positive energy and effects,but as long as they are followed, practiced and rendered with devotion and faith.

The age-old Mantra-Karagre vasate Lakshmi, Kara madhye Saraswaty., Karamoole tu Govindaha, Prabhate Kara Darshanam points out not only to the symbolic location of the Goddesses in one's possessing the entire cosmic energy of the combined Goddesses within the miniscule and infinitesimal palm, (perhaps the same principle is followed by Reiki practitioners). Hence, in temple worship ,the various Mudras or hand grestures and in arts like Bharatanatyam,the Hastas bear divine semblance and significance other than just the beautous appeal. Simple yet highly figurative and meaningful adornment and embellishment like the red colour application on hands and feet and other paraphernalia usually associated with the dancer's attire all add up to the totality of experience.

Accompained by a supplication through music and dance ,involving movement of face, limbs and other parts of the body, these gestures can bring one face to face with an image or idea worshipped. A degree of purity of oneself if maintained, can be helpful to overcome diversions and distractions. Unless saturated with devotion, any Sadhana cannot kindle divine essence and spark with a mere automated, impersonal, soulless or perfunctory movement. Tapping and tuning in with the spirit and force would help channelise it just as one would get connected to a radio station with necessary tuning. Call him mystical, celestial or seraphic in nature, a true Yogi becomes 'hallowed' due to devoted practice.

Coming back to our festivals, the celebrations are to be done with due regard to environment....just as we have to give regard to other issues like hospitals' waste dumping, water purification, drainage etc...Care could be taken on the methods followed to make these idols with eco friendly substances and the cleanliness observed while immersion is very important. The significance has to be shared with our children so that the next generation would get involved in preserving and fostering our Indian heritage. Modern in outlook,. yet traditional in roots is the best adage for the day

THE ROLES THAT SUIT MEN AS AGAINST WOMEN -GENDER PLAY IN DANCE.

Women are suitable to do both male and female roles but can the same be said of men? Worth considering if there is a hidden man inside a women (the word 'women' also approbates this) and what about vice versa? We should analyze first on the external front and then the internal levels giving us a gender gallery of contrast and congruity.

It is exciting and enhancing for women to drape shirts and trousers designed to befit their style or sometimes even without any variations by wearing typically male dresses. But can one imagine men in sarees or any other typically female attire? Desgusting, isn't it ? A distortion which is worth only an obliteration ! What men do can be imitated and to counterfeit their appearance to deliberately create a semblance would still be for women, in conformity with norms. If a women could carry herself well with elegance and grace alike, she becomes a true beauty, if she exudes confidence, courage and determination, she becomes a true example, if she can fight a battle, and also nurse the wounded, stare boldly yet shed tears, she becomes a legend! But unfortunately though, a man seen crying, lementing or moaning without sufficient reason could become a defaced and deformed figure, not befitting his 'Manhood' Qualities of kindness, warmth, compassion are also extolled in a man but are appealing only if veiled in this inherent habitual 'ruggedness'. Otherwise, he gets belittled and chided and a crude word 'effeminate' gets attached to him.

The corollary of the above is noticed in the world of Bharatanatyam as well. Ordinarily, the dance of Shiva, Lord Nataraja (even His pose) requires the highest brilliance,sheer pulsating tempo and a powerful vocabulary. If at all one is capable of reproducing this, then may be one or two shades of the cosmic dance becomes visible in the dancer.

This 'Tandavam' by both male and female dancers exudes delight and aplomb. The other dance aspect of 'Lasya' which is the graceful and charming element is equally delectable but care has to be taken while performed by a male dancer to see that this effect does not linger beyond the stage limits and sleep into his 'persona.'

It is worth noting here that the male dancers raraly performed those days but often taught as Nattuvanars. It is related to the Purusha - Prakriti dualism embodied in the dualism of the human nature. Purusha (the macrocosm) remains unmoved whereas Prakriti (cotaining thePurusha's atom or seed asmicrocosm) is permitted to oscillate. We have to admit that some male dancers are certainly able /were able to portray female roles as well or better than female dancers. It is important to note what should 'not' be carried forward by male dancers outside stage area. Men articulating very often with facial and bodially gestures like women as a result of dance practice is disturbing onlookers. Of coures, this feminine demeanor need not always be a result of Bharatanatyam. It was felt not without any grounds that a woman's body is better suited for performing this dance, while a man's mind is better at analyzing and teaching it. Learning from the traditional lineage of male Gurus gave the girls the best training to dance and blend the dualities cohesively.

It becomes then, a great challenge for men, to 'not allow' a Bharatanatya dancer's mannerisms to interfere with the otherwise normal personality. Internally, while dance cleanses like YOGA, externally it may add certain distinctly conspicuous characteristics which look undesirable on men. Specifically speaking with adherence to dance technique, in pur dance or Nritta ,the Admmia(neck-shake) and certain graceful rendered Adavus (steps)can be refined with a degree of restraint for male dance student. Above all ,the typical dancerly gait has to be very well monitored by the teachers.

This disparity and insinuation the 'style' of male dancers would remain as long as man's age -old perception of beauty and philosophy of aesthetics having been fortified by historical and mythological role models, would remain........................

-Padmaja Venkatesh

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PROFESSOR R. D. RANADE's POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

A study of the nature and justification of coercive institutions is political philosophy (Audi 1999 : 718). Right from the early times down to the present, several thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Manu, Kautilya, Hammurabi, Confucious, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Mahatma Gandhi, B. R. Ambedkar, Lohia, J. P. Narayan, R. D. Ranade (1886-1957) have enriched the realm of political philosophy in one way or the other. However, it is necessary to note here that the entire edifice of Prof. R. D. Ranade's political philosophy is built on the firm foundation of principles of peace, harmony, ethics and spirituality. The insightful observations made by Prof. Ranade, from time to time, on various issues relating to Freedom Struggle of India, construction of new Independent India, promoting peace and harmony in the entire world, need a detailed and systematic elucidation and hence the present maiden attempt.

The following incidents mirror Prof. Ranade's views on who should take part in the freedom movement or in politics.

In 1917, Shri Lokmanya Tilak requested Prof. Ranade to take part in politics. But Prof. Ranade politely said no to it on three grounds. First, Prof. Ranade had no inherent liking for politics, but for spirituality. Second, Prof. Ranade had already decided to serve the Deccan Educational Society by virtue of being its life member. Third, Prof. Ranade endorsed the view of Sri Tilak that only a *sthitaprajna* should enter political life (*Vide* for details Deshpande 1981 : i; ii). In brief, Prof. Ranade feels that a person with a powerful urge to enter politics can do so provided he is a *Sthitaprajna* and is not committed to fulfil any other promise.

The description that follows indicates the stand taken by Prof. Ranade on the pupils' participation in the freedom movement.

For about six and half years, i.e., from January 1938 to August 1945, Prof. Ranade was Dean[1] of the faculty of Arts at Allahabad University. On the twelfth August 1942, a huge procession was taken out by the pupils of Allahbad University and Lal Padma Dhar Singh became a martyr. Many were killed and injured. Prof. Ranade cautioned the pupils against taking extreme steps and counselled patience and forbearance. They were comforted and calmed down. Prof. Ranade's saintly[2] nature came to his assistance in grave circumstances (*Vide* for details Kulkarni 1997 : 31-32).

Sri. D. H. Kolhar and Sri S. G. Kulkarni - the two natives of Bijapur used to stay at Prof. Ranade's residence with a view to pursuing their higher studies. These two students took part in the procession. Prof. Ranade, therefore, called them and said, 'I am told that both of you joined the Students' Union procession and that there was Lathi charge and firing, and that Padma Dhar Singh was hit by the bullet and died. This is indeed very unfortunate. I can very well understand your feelings. No use to be impetuous. Tell me, have you come here to study quitely or participate in political work ? I have great patriotic feelings[3], no less than yours. In my younger days, I was close to Lokmanya Tilak and was for sometime associated with *Kesari* and *Maratha* papers he ran. After a short stint, I realised that politics was not for me and I took a life of teaching and spiritualism..... If you actively participate in politics, you can go back to Bijapur, and if you need, I will give you the Railway Fare'... Later these two students promised Prof. Ranade that they would not take any active part in the movement but completely devote themselves to their studies (*Vide* for details Kulkarni 1997 : 47-48). Thus, it is evident from the above that in the opinion of Prof. Ranade student life is meant for studies and not for taking any active part in politics.

Prof. Ranade advocates that spiritual life must be sought and cultivated as an end in itself and never as a means to achieve other ends. An incident related to this is given below.

Once a young *Brahmachari* from Hubli had been to Prof. Ranade for being initiated. He had taken an active part in Non-cooperation movement for about six years. He had jail experience. Prof. Ranade instructed him to choose between political life and spiritual life as the former is not much congenial to the latter. Unable to arrive at a definite decision regarding his final choice, this good natured young man who wanted to develop spiritual power to promote his political aspirations politely took leave (*Vide* for details Sangoram, Deshpande 1977 : 228-29, Kulkarni 1990 : 144=45).

Prof. Ranade had indicated certain precautionary measures to be taken before seeking Independence in the following manner :-

1) The quarrel between Hindus and Muslims must be ended somehow.
2) We must achieve scientific development superior to both America and Germany.
3) We must rise to such spiritual height that we must realise that all humanity is one (Sangoram, Deshpande 1977 : 248-49).

When India became free on 15th August 1947, Prof. Ranade was delighted, but he also felt at the same time that certain steps ought to be taken to preserve Independence and build New India.

Prof. Ranade gives a sound note of warning. " Even though we somehow got independence, the big powers surrounding our country, that are hourly waiting to pounce upon us, will easily snatch our Independence in no time" (Sangoram, Deshpande 1977: 247). In other words, Prof. Ranade enunciates that constant vigilance is absolutely essential to preserve independence.

Now, I focus on what Prof. Ranade has to say regarding the construction of New India.

"..........there have been two opposite, almost antagonistic, streams of thought in what might be called New India itself: one, the spiritual, the other, the materialistic; the first bordering on the superstitious; the other culminating in intellectual nihilism. There are healthy elements in both these activities: but the superstructure in either case has been most inartistically raised. If a true temple to "national activity" is to be reared, we must demolish the uncouth structures, and raise out of their materials a building, both artistic and solid, calculated to attract the attention of our contemporaries by its artistic skill, and to go down to posterity on account of its long enduring elements " (Ranade 1956 : 165).

" It is always upon the past that we must build up the present, and those who despise their ancestors, will themselves be despised by the posterity" (Ranade 1956 : 171).

" Let not an age of pure scientists, pure economists and pure calculators prevail and let not the glory of India be extinguished for ever. Religion asks from you merely the consent of the heart, a mere touch of the Love of God. I do not understand how this can come in the way of pure activity. It would..........serve only to strengthen activity, and not weaken it. This is the only secure platform upon which the building of India's activities can be raised. Take it away, and the building will tumble down in no time. Substitute another foundation and you will find that the building will be raised on mere stubble........" (Ranade 1956 :183).

"............I must not be supposed to hold that India must be flooded with *philosophers, Yogies,* and *Bhaktas* : far from it..........I am a firm believer in the manifold activities of a nation, supplimenting, instead of contradicting one another. I hold that when nation rises, it rises from all points of view............We must have scientists as well as philosophers; men who go in for action, men who sit down to contemplate, people who devote themselves to social regeneration as well as those who care for personal development" (Ranade 1956 : 182).

In 1951, at Belgaum, Prof. Ranade has aired his dissent over the formation of linguistic provinces to the media which sought his opinion on this issue :

" Formation of Linguistic Provinces is going to be harmful to the interest of India. The Congress leaders in the past gave once approval to the creation of linguistic provinces and they are continuing to do the same foolish act. If Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka become seperate provinces, how can people of the regions get in future, the advantage of living together harmoniously ? Culture grows on account of the mutual contact. To promote the growth of culture, the establishment of linguistic universities is required and not linguistic provinces. In my opinion, an attempt to integrate India by creating linguistic provinces will prove to be futile. Of course, these are my personal views, because I am not any political leader (Tulpule 1965 : 311).

To build a New India, blind emulation of any nation is to be avoided according to Prof. Ranade.

" What business has India to do with nations on high altitudes like............China and Pakistan on the one hand, or with nations on low lands like Ceylon...... on the other ? We have got nothing to do with their ideologies and their ideals. Let us pursue our path as Kudaluresa has said, and take our nation to its highest ideals. Let us not care for other people's ideals.............(Ranade 1960 : 108).

" We do not want India to imitate either France or America...........Ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity would lead merely to national death. The French revolution which he (Mr. Har Dayal) glorifies, - is not this Revolution responsible for modern Anarchism and Nihilism ? It is time that India should cease to be polluted by merely the worse elements of Western Civilization...........Has not the suffragette movement served simply to make men of European women, by taking away all their elegant graces and virtues ? Does it not seem that "almost a new sex is on the make like the feminine neuter of Ants and Bees - not adopted for child bearing " and yet with a pretended power for social service ? And what is it due to but to the spirit of liberty, social equality, rationalism and fraternity "...........(Ranade 1956 : 183-84).

However, like Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Dr. Abdul Kalam, Prof. Ranade is very optimistic about the bright future of India.

" If India must rise, she will rise in a most peculiar way, not hitherto known to all History. She will combine the virtues of the West and the East, and will rise superior to both. If the West and the East are to meet, they meet in India and not in Europe. What a glorious prospect lies before India ! I see India flinging away superstition, sloth and intellectual inertia. I see her taking up the scientific spirit, and the energy of Europe. I see her assimilating the excellences of both the East and the West, and rising in the scale of modern nations, preserving all the while the integrity and the pristine purity of her spiritual self " (Ranade 1956 : 184) !

Let me now elaborate at some length, Prof. Ranade's the most cherished maxim : "One God, One World, One Humanity". Prof Ranade reiterates that none of these - politics, bookish knowledge, philosophical arguments, different religious faiths[4], communism, socialism etc. can annihilate differences in mankind. League of Nations is wiped out. Soon U.N.O. will meet with the same fate. Spiritual religion alone can bring harmony in the entire world. (*Vide* for details Tulpule 1965 : 280).

" Hindus and Muslims, Nazis and Jews, Communists and Fascists would never be reconciled by any political or moral theories. It is only when all humanity comes to recognise the one Spiritual Principle which underlies all things, that we can bring about a harmony between different creeds, nations and races " (Ranade 1956 : 120).

" It is only by realising the essential unity of human nature and thereby establishing fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man that the real good of humanity can be achieved. This is the ideal preached and practised by all saints and sages and prophets of the world in the past. Spiritual religion, the creed of all saints of the world, can alone save us from all seperatist, disorganising and dissipating tendencies and forces " (Sangoram, Deshpande 1978 : 54-55).

" You have to build and thatch the 'City of God - devotion', give shade and shelter to all those who may come to stay in it, live in it yourself along with your brother devotees. It is a 'Theopolis' where God is the Supreme Ruler and all humanity, bound together by spiritual tie, becomes equal and aspiring denizens, whose only vocation is to fill the world with the praise and glory of God" (*Vide* for details Deshpande 1982 :143).

"The mystics of all ages and countries have spoken the same language, as they are denizens of the same spiritual world. There are no racial, no communal, no national prejudices among them. Time and space have nothing to do with the eternal and infinite character of their mystical experience. These together constitute a band of divine musicians, each contributing his own note, and all together producing a harmony that is wonderful" (Ranade 1997 : 6).

" One has only to remember that it becomes the mission of a God-realiser to spread the Gospel of God, whenever and wherever it becomes possible for him to do so. One God, One World, One Humanity, should be his maxim, theopolity his doctrine. Whoever realises the unity or presence of God, can never but direct his life in such a way that the greatness of God becomes not merely understood but also achievable " (Ranade 1959 : 136).

Thus, Prof. Ranade's political philosophy is an eye-opner to all those who are interested in the true welfare of India and the world at large.

Notes:

1. Prof. Ranade and Sir Sharaft Ahmed Khan were the two contestants for the Deanship. Prof. Ranade won the election by a very thin margin. However, it is interesting to note that Prof. Ranade voted not for himself but for Khan (*Vide* for details Kulkarni 1997: 22-26).

2. According to Prof Ranade, saints' grace saved India, during the World War (*Vide* Sangoram, Deshpande 1977 : 22-26).

3. Prof. Ranade wanted to do something for the freedom of the nation in 1908. For a while he joined the training camp meant for baton weilding etc. at Deccan College. But he gave it up soon as he was convinced that he would serve the nation only by leading spiritual life, Thus, the love for the nation became one of the prime incentives for his spiritual life (*Vide* Sangoram, 1964 : 201).

4. By the term 'secular' Prof. Ranade understands 'super-religious' and not 'non-religious'. This 'super-religious' based on spirituality alone can bring harmony among people who practise different religious faiths (*Vide* for details Tulpule, 1965 : 258-59, 280-81, Deshpande, 1982 : 102).

Regarding the question as to which is to be pursued, whether secular duty or spiritual duty, Prof. Ranade says that it would not be incompatible to combine the two. His truest advice is a combination of secular and spiritual work. We should utter the name of God with every breath while the hands may be engaged in work. (Kulkarni 1974 :117)

Prof. Ranade worked a great deal for Islamic Philosophy and its students (*Vide* for details Kulkarni 1997 : 17).

Prof. Ranade had disciples from all walks of life - rich and poor, Hindus and Non-Hindus, Harijans and Girijans.

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(Continued from last issue)

ETERNITY COMPRESSED IN TIME : MY REMINISCENCES OF SHRI GURUDEVA

Shri Gurudeva is considering poems of Hindi saints relating to the mystical summit attained by them. He has arranged the songs concerned in an ascending order of spiritual experience. In this regard we have acquainted ourselves with songs of Mirabai, Surdas, Tulsidas, Gorakhnath, Dharamdas, Yari, Eknath and Mahipati dealing with a variety of Super-sensuous experiences. We next come to the song of Charandas, which describes physiological, psychological, moral, metaphysical and yogic effects of God-realisation. Then we witnessed the spiritual experiences of Kabir marked by sublimity and ineffability. Shri Gurudeva then depicted for us the rare mystical experiences of Kabir and Dadu concerning divine juice called रामरस .. In a visibly autobiographical manner he narrated how the partaking of divine juice culminated in the blissful merger of the saint and God in the divine juice. Shri Gurudeva again made a transition from divine juice to divine liquor. Kabir's partaking of spiritual liquor resulted in a state of intoxication marked by absolute freedom and equanimity. The summit of spiritual experience is thus attained in divine ecstasy exemplified in Kabir, Maula and Sakha.

Post ecstatic ejaculations seem to be inseparable part of any saint enjoying divine ecstasy. Shri Gurudeva illustrates this phenomenon by giving a graphic depiction of the experiences of Gulal, Narharinath and Raidas. We have already studied this point. Shri Gurudeva now proceeds to consider the highest watermark of "जीवन्मुक्ति", in Kabir namely, his apostleship and prophethood. In the poem "कहू रे जो कहिने की होइ" of Kabir, he notes three important points. 'In the first place, Kabir asserts that the world is indifferent to the saints; second, he analyses the causes of this indifference; third, he proclaims his prophethood to the world. He begins by saying cryptically, "I will tell you only if it can be told by word of mouth. I am astonished at people's indifference, inspite of my continued endeavours for their betterment." Shri Gurudeva here recalls similar utterances from great men like Jesus Christ, Veda Vyas, Ramdas and Mahatma Gandhi. Jesus Christ has told us that a prophet is not honoured in his own time and country. The great Vyasa said in the Mahabharata, "ऊर्ध्वबाहुर्विरौम्येष नहि कशिचत शृणोति माम"- with my hands uplifted, I am telling the whole world to listen; but nobody is so good as to listen to me." Ramdas has said, "सांग सांगोन दमलो ! पाठी जगाच्या लागलो ! जग ऐकेनासे झाले ! " I am tired of teaching the world. People have remained listless and indifferent, in spite of my repeated efforts to better them.". Mahatma Gandhi also uttered similar words towards the end of his career.

Analysing the causes of this indifference, Kabir finds that people are following each his own whim. They are corrupted by arrogance and avarice. The Bhagvadgita has characterized such men as "लोमोपहतचेतस:". They are filled with attachments both personal and impersonal to the very end of their life, and are losing their own selves.

" मै मेरी करि यह तनु खोयी, समझत नही गंवार ! "

Kabir tells us that such people become exhausted in the middle of the sea of life, and innumerable others go to the bottom.

Lastly, with great pity for this condition of this world, Kabir unmistakenly proclaims his apostleship or prophethood to the world. "God in his graciousness gave me the mandate and the power to save some at least, and thus bring light into the life of some. If you are not now saved, you have to blame yourself and not me, " Shri Gurudeva here recalls the famous Abhanga of the great Tukaram composed in the same spirit :

वचनाचा अनुभव हाती ! बोलाविती देव मज !

परि हे न कळे अभाविका ! जड लोका जीवांसी !

अश्रुत हे प्रासादिक ! कृपा भीक स्वामीची ।

तुका म्हणे वरावरी । जातो तरी सांगत ।

" It is not I who is speaking to you," says Tukaram;" It is God who is speaking through me. Those who may not put their faith in me may not regard this as true. I am telling you words which are filled with the grace of God." "It fills me with wonder," says Tukaram, "how in spite of my repeated warning the world is not listenining to me." Shri Gurudeva remarks that Kabir's message was not different from that of Tukaram. (Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, P. 300).

Shri Gurudeva comes to the last poem of Kabir, namely, "गुरू ने मोहिं दीन्ही अजब जडी" while considering Kabir's rise to prophethood. In this poem Kabir may be said to have summed up his entire spiritual life. "My Guru," says Kabir, "gave me a miraculous herb. It was full of mellifluous juice : 'अमत रसन भरी' I deposited it in a mysterious vault inside my heart : 'कायानगर अजब इक बंगला तामे गुप्त धरी'. Now the value and power of this herb is that all the five Nagas and the twenty-five Nagins die an instantaneous death as soon as they smell it. Shri Gurudeva poses the question : "What are these five Nagas and twenty-five Nagins? " It is interesting to find Kabir talking here so much in terms of Samkhya Philosophy. Shri Gurudeva quotes Ishvara-Krishna's famous passage, which describes the twenty-five Tattvas, as follows :

मूल प्रकृति विकृतिः महदाद्या प्रकृति विकृतयः सप्त ।
षोड्शकस्तु विकारो न प्रकृति; न विकृति पुरूषः ।

Pointing out the lacuna in this enumeration, Shri Gurudeva says, "We shall see that he (Ishvara-Krishna) has not made any mention of five Pranas. The five Jnanendriyas are there; the five Karmendriyas are there; the five Mahabhutas are there; the five tanmatras are there; and five other entities, namely, Prakriti, Mahat, Ahankara, Manas and Purusha, are there; but there is no mention of the Pancha Pranas. The five Pranas are Nagas, and the twenty-five Tattvas are Nagins. All these die an instantaneous death when they smell this mystic herb. The power of this herb is thus superior to the five Pranas, and the twenty-five elements. Beyond these five Nagas and twenty-five Nagins, there is also a dark great cobra, which is representative of death. This Kaliya, who threatened even Krishna, of course, does not die by means of this herb. Death cannot 'die', but he becomes terrified. He is terrified by the vision of the Sadguru : सदगुरू देख डरी. Thus, said Kabir, he was saver by the power of the Sadguru. Not only was he himself saved, but also he was able to save those who were His associates नै परिवार तरी !

Shri Gurudeva has appreciated the conception of Parivara-Mukti, which Kabir has in mind. It is different from the conception of Sarva-Mukti, which has occupied a prominent place in contemporary Indian thought. "We think that the conception of Sarva-Mukti is wrong. It breaks the Law of Sufficient Reason. It is too much to believe that when one saint is born, the whole world is saved. The Parivara-Mukti is understandable, but Sarva-Mukti passes beyond our comprehension. It is all very well for Lord Buddha to say poetically : कलि कलुष कृतानि यानि लोके,मारी निपतन्तु विमच्यतां हि लोके !! In contrast with such a conception of Sarva-Mukti stands the conception of Eka-Mukti, which is familiar to students of Vedantic thought. Has not Carlyle told us to look to our own saving, and leave the saving of the world to its maker ? The conception of Parivara-Mukti of which Kabir is speaking takes a via media between Sarva-Mukti and Eka-Mukti. The Eka-Mukti and Sarva-Mukti are the thesis and the antithesis, of which Parivara-Mukti is the synthesis. The Sadguru, according to Kabir, is therefore one who liberates not merely himself, but also his associates. His associates in Leibnitzean fashion get the benefit of a spiritual vinculum with him. Do not iron filings catch up the power of the magnet ? Do not the planets derive their illumination from the central orb ? It is following some such line of argument that Kabir was able to say that on account of the presence and the power of God in him, he was able to save not merely himself, but also all those who had been fortunate enough to come into spiritual communion with him. (Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, pp. 302-3).

(To be continued.....)

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"Once upon a time the idea occured to me," says Ramanand, "that I might make a very fragrant mixture of sandal and other perfumes, and then go out to worship God. But my teacher showed my God within myself to whom I could make all my offerings"

-Pathway To God in Hindi Literature, p. 102)

WHEN SAINTS SMILE

Though spiritualism is a serious business, its practitioners sometimes exhibit a subtle sense of humour, wit and sarcasm like others do. The saints who haven't renounced the world are sometimes made to negotiate with antagonistic worldly circumstances or erring disciples or just funny situations. Therefore they too need to be tactful; and humour and irony serve them as effective tools. We know of Socrates and his shrewish wife. One day she welcomed him home letting loose a barrage of abuses. As if it was not enough, she poured a pot of water on him. Socrates, with an enviable coolness said, it was only natural that after thundering, it rained.

Here are a few more lesser known, sophisticated and insightful humorous anecdoes from the lives of saints. Tukaram Maharaj, the seventeenth century Marathi saint-poet, shared a common feature with Socrates. He too had a shrew for a wife, who always nagged him for not doing any work, and for neglecting to feed family. 'My wife just loves to curse me,' says Tukaram Maharaj. This god-crazy man, she complains, is only striking cymbals, and opening his grotesque mouth to sing to his god in his shrine !

To all her accusations, Tukaram Maharaj's consolation is : 'be patient, my woman ! This is only the beginning !'

A legend has it that saint Tukaram Maharaj once willingly invited trouble for himself in order to save a woman who had gone astray. The angry town people seated him on a donkey and took out a procession with a garland of onions around his neck. Tukaram Maharaj was happy, thinking that if people had eulogised him it would have distracted him from God. When the procession ended at his house, he handed over the garland to his wife and said, 'This will help your cooking today ! '

Tukaram was equally at ease with his God, Viththal. Another anecdote illustrates this very clearly. Few people once approached him with a request to perform a kirtan for them. Tukaram Maharaj felt the best way to do it was to recite Viththal, Viththal.........and soon was rapt in the meditative bliss. As he opened his eyes after a while, there was nobody around him, except Viththal himself! Seeing him Tukaram Maharaj said, "Why do you stand here alone, you too can go and sleep !'

Bhausaheb Maharaj, a great yogi and an exponent of the Nimbargi house of bhakti tradition, prevalent during the nineteenth century in Karnataka and Maharashtra, on finding dozing disciples during his spiritual discourses would look meaningfully at another disciple who would loudly hail god's glory. The sleepy disciples would suddenly get up thinking that the discourse had ended. The Maharaj would then ask the sleeping disciple to wait a little longer.

During one of his visits to a village, an elderly woman expressed her inability to see him due to poor vision. The Maharaj blessed her with good sight. Gradually her vision got better. The next year, when the Maharaj again visited the village, she complained about decaying teeth. 'Why, do you want to be a young girl again ? ', the Maharaj chided her away.

In yet another village, another old woman requested him to bless her home with a child. Her wish was granted. But on her way back home, she thought, 'What if I get a child, instead of my daughter-in-law ? ' She returned to him and let know her fears and asked for the amendment, which too was granted. When the Maharaj returned the next year, her daughter-in-law was going the family way. This time the old woman sent her son to the Maharaj to ask what name should be given to the baby to be born. The Maharaj said, 'Your mother is very clever. She wants to know the sex of the child."

In yet another incident, Maharaj wanted to initiate an old lady into spirituality. But as she was deaf, he had to loudly utter the divine name in her ear. However, this benefited a young man, a bystander, who although wanted to be initiated into spirituality, was afraid to ask for it. Now that he had heard the Maharaj, he began to meditate.

Amburao Maharaj, a disciple of Bhausaheb Maharaj, addressed as 'Baba', once came to know that one of his own disciples, scared after seeing the spiritual serpent during his meditation, had stopped meditations. 'Don't worry, it won't bite you, it only blinks and stares,' Baba assured him.

Baba used to cite examples from the life of Saint Bhanudas. Every time saint Bhanudas went to Pandurang's temple, he found the lord's head bent down. One day, after seeing a very sick man on his way to the temple, he thought, "why should not God cure this man ? " Later in the temple the saint saw, to his surprise, that Pandurang's head was upright. When asked for the reason, God said, 'All these days you asked me nothing. Your bhkti was a burden on me, but today you prayed for that sick man, and I felt a little off-loaded.'

Gurudev Ranade, a mystic of a very high order and a man of immense learning, occasionally lapsed into gentle humour. One morning at his ashram in Nimbal, a disciple of his was singing a Udaya raga (morning song) to wake God from sleep. Gurudev who was passing by, stopped, and asked the singer 'Are you awake ? '

Many learned men used to call on Gurudev to dicuss philosophical and mystical problems with him. On one occasion, when a professor was discussing a serious topic with him, Gurudev's little daughter came in to enquire from her father what vegetable had to be cooked for the day. Gurudev exclaimed, "What an antithesis ! Here I am discussing the nature of Brahma, and you are asking me about the vegetables that has to be cooked ! "

In 1948, the Allahabad University conferred an honourary D. Litt. on Gurudev alongwith Jawaharlal Nehru. Sarojini Naidu the then Governor of U.P., was also the chancellor of the University. Gurudev who was present on the occasion accepted the degree, but left behind the certificate on the table. Sarojini Naidu noticed it and said, "Prof. Ranade, you are really a great philosopher. You have forgotten your degree here!".

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(Source : Deccan Herald News Paper)

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> *....When Kabir's mind had almost ceased to exist, and his body had become weak and emaciated, God followed Kabir as Kabir was walking alone. God called out 'Kabir, Kabir', but Kabir would not listen, and moved on. Now, this is a kind of refernce about which a good deal of information is to be found in Maharashtra and Kannada Saints, aswell as in the Upanishads.*
>
> *-Gurudev Ranade in Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, pp. 388-89.*

LINGAYATISM (VIRASAIVISM)-A RATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The discovery of the various elements comprising the definiteness of experience can only be done through the discerning eye of a hypothesis. This is so because, " *the chief danger to philosophy is narrowness in the selection of evidence.* "[1]. The test of the adequacy of such a hypothesis " *will be on the whole, coherence together with comprehensiveness; he (the philosopher) must aim at giving a systematic consistent picture of human experience and of the world in which as much is explained as can from the nature of the case admit of explanation, but he must not purchase coherence at the expense of rejecting what in its own right is real knowledge or justified belief.*"[2] We live, move and have our being in and through the interlocked existences. Our knowledge, by its conscious discriminative insight, must exhibit this fact of the reality of relations. If we are not to deface this sense of our existence, any philosophical theory must account for the real functioning of relations in our experience. The problem of relations is to render the inter-connectedness of things intelligible.

Any philosophical theory which holds a substance-quality conception of actuality renders the

the problem of relations incapable of any solution. On Hume's theory (hypothesis) there can be no direct evidence of the inter-connectedness of things in so far as Hume's hypothesis shows the relevance of evidence in terms of impressions of sensation and that *"no one such impression by its own individual nature discloses any information as to another such impression, then on that hypothesis the direct evidence for inter-connectedness vanishes."*[3] Even on the Cartesian theory (hypothesis) of reality as independent substance, requiring nothing but itself in order to exist, no evidence about the interconnectedness of things can be discovered. The history of modern philosophy is the story of the attempts to evade the inflexible consequences of this hypothesis of Descartes. In all these theories, in one way or another, some real features of reality are relegated to a subordinate ontological status. The result always does violence to that immediate experience which we express in our actions, our types, our sympathies, our purposes, which we enjoy in spite of our lack of phrases for its verbal analysis.

We find ourselves in a buzzing world, amid a democracy of fellow creatures; whereas, in some disguise or other, orthodox philosophy can only introduce us to solitary substances, each enjoying an illusory experience. If these theories (philosophies or doctrines) are rejected the only alternative course philosophy has to, is to admit reality as relational. In that case we will have to hold with Alfred North Whitehead and the Virsaiva (Lingayata)

Vacanakaras (Virasaiva saint thinkers, philosophers and reformers of 12th century - Karnataka) that *"all final individual activities have the metaphysical character of occasions of experiences, then on that hypothesis the direct evidence as to the connectedness of one's immediate present occasion of experience with one's immediate past occasions, can be validly used to suggest categories applying to the connectedness of all occasions in nature."*[4] The final facts are, all alike, actual entities (things), and these actual entities (things) are drops of experience, complex interdependent. The problem of relations, therefore, is to render intelligible this interdependence or interconnection of things.

One cannot go behind immediate experience to find the reality of relations in so far as analysis of immediate experience is the sole justification for any thought - philosophic or otherwise. The very nature and function of relations is to relate the things, terms or relata. Our conception of relations should not do away with the need for terms. Similarly our conception of things, terms or relata should not do away with the need for relations. A sound philosophical theory must so conceive the nature of a term as to be in need of relations with other terms; otherwise the relations will have no role to perform and conversely it must concieve of relations in such manner as to relate the terms. Relations, to be true to their function, do require multiple terms that are of the nature of a concrete and complex whole.

In Virasaivism (Lingayatism) the nature of God and his relationship with man and the world is expressed in terms of metaphors :

" It's like secret fire hidden in the water;
Like the flavor of the sap
In the tender plant; like to the perfume
Within the bud; like a maiden's love,
O lord Kudala Sangama ! "[5]

Virasaivism (Lingayatism) so conceives the nature of man, world and God as to stand in mutual requirement so that each thirsts to enter into relation with the others by making a difference to the other. Basaveshvara expresses this as follows :

" I call upon thee, but thou know'st me not;
Drudge for thee' thou see'st me not
How can I live, Lord, how survive ?
Thou only, Kudala Sangama Lord,
Art to me life, art ground and goal "[6]

And,

" An oyster in the sea, I gape and gasp !
Lo, save thou, there is none
Who knows me, Lord Kudala Sangama !
Besides thee there is none;
To take me to his heart !"[7]

In these vacanas (sayings) Basaveshvara says that if such a relation were not a really existential fact between them, then it is like (sic) "........*loosening a calf that will not suck, to a cow that will not (sic) suckle!*" (No. 109, V.B.).

Thus, whatever is must matter to whatever else is. If no relation existed between things then it is as good as saying that " to exist " and " not to exist " means the same thing, thus showing their irrelavance AkkaMahadevi, a great women Virasaiva (LIngayata) saint of 12th Century Karnataka, expresses this very concept (thought) as follows :

" When tree rubs tree and fire is born,
The trees and shrubs around are set on fire;
When soul rubs soul and god experience;
Is born, the traits of body are all burnt,
Therefore, O cenna Mallikarjuna,
Do thou save me, by showing me,
The experience of the great mystic saints "[8]

And Basaveshvara expresses this very idea thus :

" I lost all shame and bashfulness; I lost all pride of
Class and self; having adored thee, O sanga I lost
This worldly life; attain thee, O Kudala Sangama
Lord, I lost my wheel of birth ! "[9]

Thus, from the above vacanas, it is evident that the relations have their meaning and function only when they modify and constitute the nature of terms. If this real role of relations is not recognized it becomes impossible to make sense of what the Virasaiva (Lingayata) vacanakaras say about man, world and God. It is a travesty of evidence to ignore the reality of relations. This relational view of the nature of things, including God, is the basic premise from which all reasoning proceeds in Virsaivism. The logical consistency of the arguments in this paper must be tested with reference to the premise concerning the reality and meaningfulness of relations.

But as A. C. Ewing says," *there must be some intution if there is to be inference at all and there is no way of determining by priori argument in what fields intuition is or is not possible.*" [10] The significance of relations is such that it has effectiveness beyond itself. Values achieved in the lives of individuals' temporal experiences have their effectiveness beyond themselves in the lives of other temporal creatures and the everlasting life of God. Akkamahadevi, one of the greatest women Virsaiva (Lingayata) Vacanakaras (Saranas) of 12th century in Karnataka, expresses this thought as follows :

"I grew up in the grace of the innumerable ones,......" [11]

And Basaveshvara strengthens this view when he says,
".......those who earn merit here, earn also there.
And those who earn not here, earn neither there......." [12]

Thus the values achieved in the temporal experiences find their meaning when they are received and immortalized in God's experiences. Values by their very nature are thus immortal in so far as a divine eros cares to preserve everything that is worth preserving and therefore cannot be allowed to go waste or lost. What is not fit to be saved, God would assign it to the limbo of insignificance or irrelevance. This is the meaning of:
"....Those who earn merit here,
earn also there....

The Vacanakaras (Virasaiva [Lingayatas] Saranas) point out that the *nirakara* and *sakara* aspects of God belong to one and the same actuality of God. It is the nature of God to be impartial in imparting the aims to things in the process of development. It is his function to endow each nascent thing with an ideal of itself, which it has to accept through the exercise of its freedom. A vacana of Basaveshvara says :

> *" When you entered into us,*
> *Making no difference to class,*
> *Of insolence of rank or high estate,*
> *Should you yet look, down here,*
> *For virtues and defects ?*
> *When you ran forward to a Jangama*
> *And gave the initiation of your grace,*
> *You should accept*
> *Whatever comes even as it comes*
> *Nor say it should not come*
> *This way or that, Since you assumed*
> *Both persons - form and formlessness,*
> *If now you spurn the one and hold the other,*
> *That is itself a lack in you :*
> *Mark that, Prabhu : Kudala Sangama ! "* [13]

In this vacana the nature of man, world and God are so described in terms of principles which stand in mutual requirement, thus meeting the demands of coherence. Because the world is conceived as in the process of development, it requires direction and ideal aims without which it would not come to any completion. It is in accordance with the relational nature of God that the creative impulse divine eros, which functions in relation to the process of creation in the world. This static majesty of God's vision, if it is to pass into active creation in order to fulfill himself in the world, requires that there be a certain change or process in God's nature. Accordingly God entertains *(nenahu)* within himself the ideal possibilities in a graduated scale of relevance to the nascent temporal actualities. *(When you ran forward to Jangama [actuality]! And gave the initiation of your grace.....).*

God is a nontemporal actuality having *nirakara* and *sakara* aspects as his nature.The *sakara* aspect of God is constituted by the reception of the actualities of the universe into God's experience (No. 231, VA). The relational nature of God requires that the temporal achievements of creatures pass into the life of God. This is stated by Basaveshvara as follows :

" *Devotion was verily the Ground on which the Preceptor sprouted into the leaf called God. And on the leaf there blossomed the flower of Reason, which grew into the Nut of Right coduct.....*" [14]

" *I beg you do not fear. All servants of the Lord, who are One with Linga, truly His own, who knows what is their share in Him,......*" [15] .

This is the metaphysical nature of God based on the metaphysics of relations as dominating the nature of reality. It is from such a metaphysical nature of God that the God of religion as worshipable being can be developed. If God has no relational nature it would become impossible for him to respond to the sincere prayers of temporal creatures. The God of religion must have a social nature. Accordingly the God of Virasaivism (Lingayatism) has a metaphysical nature expounded in terms of relations.

A general metaphysical problem which all theories have to face is the problem of 'relatedness', of how one actuality is 'related' to another. For example, it appears in a special form in epistemology in the problem of perception : the problem of how 'external' entities, which are the 'objects' of percipient subjects, can be immanent' in those experiences. For unless those objects be in some respect immanent in the percipients, there can be no *experience of* those objects, and we would be thus involved in the solipsist dilemma.

If the reality of relations is not provided as a fact of experience in our philosophical scheme then it will have serious consequences in metaphysics leading to one substance reality, plurality being given the status of illusion. If plurality of substances is accepted then it will be the windowless monads as in Leibniz. It (substance philosophy) will lead to the impossibility of epistomology, religion, aesthetics and morality. Such consequences fly in the face of experience.

Virasaiva (Lingayata) thinkers are not systematic philosophers in the modern sense of the term.

They (Virasaiva thinkers) are greatest metaphysicians in the sense in which A. N. Whitehead characterizes Plato as a greatest metaphysician but poorest systematic thinker. Vacanakaras hold that nothing can be known without in some sense given in experience. This givenness is the fundamental feature of all experience. Anything out of relationship with experience there is complete ignorance about it. Accordingly there is no way of dealing with anything whatever not given in experience, we cannot even say that such a thing exists.

" In experience, escapes the joy
Of consubstantial union;
Prasada without experience confers
No peace; ay, nothing can be known
Without Experience. So could you say,
'What need has one of Siva Saranas
If one has lodgment in oneself ?'
O Kudala Sangama LOrd, could it be said
That your experience is no more
Than word clashing with word,
O Prabhu ?" [16]

The Vacanakaras thus, in this vacana, hold that one's subjective experiencing is the primary metaphysical situation providing the data for any kind of enquiry - philosophic or otherwise. Thus relation is the fundamental element in the structure of experience itself. No relation, nothing, nothing, nothing and the rest is silence.

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WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT SRI AUROBINDO's *SAVITRI* ?

Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* is an epic in blank verse consisting of 23,813 lines. It is his *magnum opus.* It is a poetic rendering of what Sri Aurobindo propounds in his philosophical treatise *The Life Divine.* On its surface *Savitri* is a story of Satyavan and Savitri. But Sri Aurobindo's purpose in writing *Savitri,* on which he worked over fifty years and revised and re-revised several times, especially Book Two, entitled "The Traveller of the Worlds" is entirely different.

Sri Aurobindo has written *Savitri* from his yogic heights. As such, the contents of *Savitri* are inaccessible to a layman. The poet himself says in one of his letters, "*Savitri* is a record of seeing, of an experience, which is not of the common kind, and it is often very far from what the general human mind sees or experiences." *Savitri* is Vedantic, spiritual, philosophical, metaphysical, historical, occult, psychological, scientific, Involution-Evolution, Tantric, apocalyptic, autobiographical all in one. All these strands are woven aesthetically into *Savitri* making thus his Synthesis of Yoga, an Integral Philosophy as he calls it.

For Sri Aurobindo the legendary story of Savitri (her birth, Narada's prophetic words, Satyavan's death, Savitri's *triratra vrata,* her wise debate with Death, Satyavan's restoration to life etc.) which occurs in *The Mahabharata-cantos 291-297, Vana Parva-* is a symbol for putting forth his own visions and spiritual experiences. He himself makes this clear before the commencement of the text: "The tale of Satyavan and Savitri is recited in the Mahabharata as a story of conjugal love conquering death. But this legend is, as shown by many features of the human tale, one of the many symbolic myths of the Vedic Cycle. Satyavan is the soul carrying the divine truth of being within itself but descended into the grip of death and ignorance. Savitri is the Divine Word, daughter of the Sun, goddess of the supreme Truth who comes down and is born to save. Aswapati, the Lord of the Horse, her human father, is the Lord of Tapasya, the concentrated energy of spiritual endeavour that helps us to rise from the mortal to the immortal planes, Dyumtsena, Lord of the Shining Hosts, father of Satyavan is the Divine Mind here fallen blind, losing its celestial kingdom of vision and through that loss its kingdom of glory. Still this is not a mere allegory, the characters are not personified qualities, but incarnations or emanations of living conscious Forces with whom we can enter into concrete touch and they take human bodies in order to help man and show him the way from his mortal state to a divine consciousness and immortal life."

Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* is divided into twelve books having forty-nine cantos in all. It is a revelation, an apocalypse next only to the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads.* The leading theme of *Savitri* is the ADVENTURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS passing through the process of Involution-Evolution from the gross physical to the supramental levels through the vital the ordinary mental, the higher mental, the supramental levels through the vital, the ordinary mental, higher mental, the illumined mental, the intuitive and the over mental Worlds. To Sri Aurobindo's Aswapati's vision all these were revealed as a World Stair.

The canvas of *Savitri* is as wide as cosmos. It takes into its purview the worlds of being that are connected with humanity. But they are not perceived because of man's limitations. Yet these levels do act upon human consciousness. These are higher planes of consciouness which are not yet manifested here but they are pressing upon the earth consciouness for manifestation.

The soul of aspiring humanity symbolised by Aswapati first descends from his human consciousness into nether regions- the lower vital region. He then ascends to the regions of the Heavens of the Mind. After soaring into the regions above Mind, in the Heavens of the Ideal and Illumined Mind he passes beyond the borders of manifested creation to the centre from where the creation proceeds. Through a shaft of Light across a tunnel that leads to the centre, he comes face to face with the World Soul, the Two-in-One. There he experiences the presence of the Divine Mother who supports the cosmos. After Aswapati's entreaties she bestows on him the boon :

"One shall descend and break the iron Law,
Change Nature's doom by the lone Spirit's Power."

to save mankind from the clutches of ignorance and death. Being a power of the Truth-Consciousness Savitri not only liberates man but also shows how man's life on earth can be fulfilled into a life divine.

This complex yet clear cosmology revealed in Aswapati's voyage enriches the uniqueness of *Savitri* and also that of the earth as a crucial centre of a divine experiment. Man, being the crown of creation is the fittest tool for such a transformation - just as *homo sapiens* have replaced *primates,* now man the mental being alone has the possibility of evolving into a supramentalised being. And that assurance was given to Savitri by the Supreme in the eleventh Book," The Book of Everlasting Day- The Eternal Day : The Soul's Choice and the Supreme Consummation." Here Savitri is promised by the Supreme :

"The Supermind shall be his nature's fount,
The Eternal's truth shall mould his thoughts and acts,
Eternal's truth shall be his light and guide."

Thus Aswapati's Yoga articulates earth's cry for perfection and in answer, the Power behind the cosmos promises the advent of Savitri. Aswapati's aspirations on behalf of the evolving humanity are to be realised by Savitri only after an ordeal and debate with Death.

The debate with Death is significant because man's life is full of contradictions. Man's problem is that he is imperfect yet there is an unquenchable thirst in him for perfection. He gropes in the darkness of ignorance and seeks for light, he is mortal and thirsts for immortality. His problem can be solved by spiritual effort alone. Even then it cannot be attained unaided. It can be solved only if the Supreme Divine is persuaded to descend on earth and take up the burden of man. Such higher divine sources are available to man. Savitri, the Supreme Power of Grace, the only feminine *Avatar* in the world, descends into life to help her children on earth to fight against the forces of Inconscience and bring to earth a new race of men embodying Supramental Consciousness.

Speaking about *Savitri*'s supremacy and uniqueness, the Mother of Pondicherry Ashram said to Mona Sarkar, one of the sadhaks, that in all great creations of the East and the West she found no work comparable to *Savitri*, "*Savitri* is fully charged with spiritual vibrations. Each verse is like a revealed *Mantra*. The total sonority of its rhythm leads to the origin of the sound 'OM'. *Savitri* is the mystery of the mysteries, super-epic, super poetry and super vision."

"*Savitri* is multidimensional.

In this way Savitri possesses several layers. In brief :

1. It is a story of Satyavan and Savitri which we all know.
2. It is an autobiography of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother of Pondicherry Ashram for the latter was his spiritual counterpart.
3. It is a poetic rendering of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Philosophy.
4. It is an adventure of consciouness - Sri Aurobindo's Dilectics is that the 'Sachchidananda in his cosmic descent comes down and the 'Chit' aspect of man rises upward and where they both meet and mingle a supramental being evolves (Involution-Evolution).
5. It is a Manual of Yoga dealing with everything connected with Yoga, the whole terrestrial existence as Yoga. The book evolves its own Yoga system together with all the systems of the past.
6. It is the poetry of the future.

Thus Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* is a typical twentieth century product not merely because it was written in the century but because in its encyclopaedic sweep it embraces and expresses the essence of the twentieth-century thought and spirit as much in philosophy and metaphysics as in sciences and scientific developments, chiefly in respect of the theories of Involution-Evolution.

Such is the unique quality of *Savitri,* 'near it retreats; far, it calls you still."

Despite this, our *aspiration* for the divine, our *rejection* of all that is undivine, out total *surrender* of what we have and what we are, can bestow the *Divine Grace.*

Then *Savitri* enfolds us into its fold to unfold the hidden meaning of this work. *Savitri* is best revealed in the egoless, silenced mind, through meditation.

But the first step towards it should be self-introspection, self-purification and self-discipline on physical, vital and mental levels.

What is revealed and offered therafter is worth the efforts.

-Prof. **Dr. Madhumati M. Kulkarni,** M.A., Ph.D.,
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> *What is the use of going to so many saints ? You know what spiritual reality is, you have experienced it and know the way to attain it. The vision of God must come from within and never from outside. So running after saints in the hope that they will bring about progress is a mere fruitless superstition.*
>
> *-Gurudeo R. D. Ranade.*

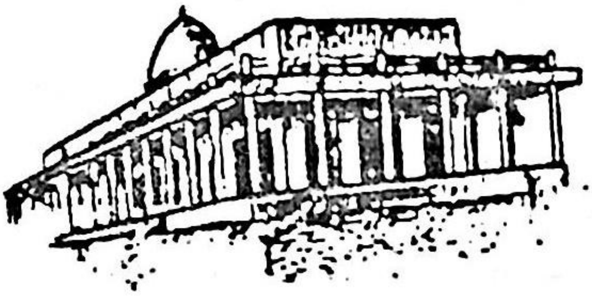
THUS SPAKE GURUDEV.....

It is the supreme duty of every human being to become a fit receptacle of the vision of God. None knows what lies on the other side of death. Not Videhamukti (Liberation after death) but attainment of peace and joy should be our ideal. One must be able to experience these while living and through living. Great indeed is the seductive power of the senses. Man's mind is tossed to and fro on the sea of sensual enjoyment like a boat helpless and hapless. How strange that man continues to think he can derive happiness from the objects of sense. Each one of the senses viz., sight, taste, sound, smell and touch, leads astray the moth, the fish, the serpent, the bee and the elephant respectively and brings about their destruction. What then would be the fate of man who is engulfed by all the five senses? Hence one has to awaken oneself to this stark reality and draw one's mind away from the objects of sense. It is never too early to enter the spiritual path. One has to drive away the lust; then alone could the Atman be born. □

According to Jnaneswar the moon on the fourteenth day of the bright half of the month is just short of the full moon day, similarly to that extent only is the difference between God and the God-realiser. Who can pronounce a judgement on such a matter without experiencing it ? The form we visualise is an index of our spiritual progress. To profit from the spiritual landmarks and intensify our spiritual efforts, can be made possible only in the case of an advanced Sadhak. If a person has the vision of saints at the time of meditation, it is due to his own merit. The saint is not concerned with that experience. This is true of visions also. Visions reflct the future in them and the reflected future comes out true. This also is due to the merit of the devotee who gets the visions. An aspirant should not put a blind faith in anything which he has not himself experienced.

Tukaram said that where there is freedom from desires, there can God be found. When man attains to the stage of desirelessness, God comes to him. He prays to God, 'Oh Lord, keep me firm and do not let me be subject to the solicitations of the flesh. I can then traverse through darkness to light.' God is near to him whose heart is mellowed by the love of God. Shri Maharaj used to say that complete Self surrender enables a man to appropriate God and not counting beads of the rosary many times over. What is wanted is the inner quality of the heart. It should be noted, however, that once an aspirant is on the right track, even the counting of beads pushes him a bit further. □

ACTIVITIES OF A.C.P.R.



Quarterly Report for the period ending 31st December 2007.

1) During the month of October, from 26th to 29th, 2007; Shri. M. B. Zirali - Secretary, ACPR Belgaum along with Shri S. M. Angadi - Advocate, Shri/Dr. I. S. Kumbar - Sub-Editor - Pathway to God and Shri B. N. Aigali -Advocate participated in the Indian Philosophical Congress 82nd Session held at Tirupati-Andhra Pradesh and succeeded in spreading the message of ACPR Belgaum to all the delegates attending the congress.

2) On 11th December, 2007, Birthday Celebration of 'OSHO' was held in the premises of ACPR Belgaum in association with Shri. Vijay Patil, Shri Vijaya Kumar Kuchanure and Shri Bashir Shaikh.

3) On 22nd December, 2007 between 5-30 p.m. and 7-00 p.m. Shriyuth M. G. Kunte - aged around 96 years delivered a lecture on " Ram-Ramayan-Ramasethu" and Shri Ashok Saraf presided over the function and Shri Ashok Potdar was the Chief Guest.

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3. Shri Pilla Muniyappa of Bangalore.
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Belgaum.
31-12-2007.

- M. B. ZIRALI,
Secretary, A. C. P. R.

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